Division of Drinking Water
Response to 2017 Wildfires

WQCC

Stefan Cajina, Chief
North Coastal Section
Division of Drinking Water
State Water Resources Control Board

Stefan.Cajina@Waterboards.ca.gov

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Role of DDW In Fire Response

- Like Regional Boards, Division of Drinking Water (DDW) engages in direct, field-level implementation and oversight. We:
  - Assess fire impact on drinking water supplies and water system infrastructure
  - Assist in identifying needs and informing appropriate responders
  - Assist in bringing water systems back to normal as quickly as possible
  - Participate in SEMS as appropriate, via SOC, local Operational Areas, and Division Response Center
  - Protect public health by ensuring that drinking water is safe, or that consumers are notified
Immediate Impacts on DDW

- October 9, 2017: multiple fires start overnight in North Bay counties (and elsewhere). Hundreds of structures and many thousands of acres consumed by morning, thousands evacuated.
- DDW Santa Rosa staff responsible for all affected water systems, but many are evacuated and all are affected by fire conditions.
- DDW Santa Rosa office stays open with skeleton crew for initial response; others work from wherever they can.
- DDW mobilizes statewide to support response effort.
DDW Response

- Day 1: Tasked GIS-savvy staff with generating list of possibly impacted systems (initial list contained about 130).
- Immediately began contacting affected systems.
- Created tracking spreadsheet for internal use and external stakeholders (SOC, local EOCs, CalWARN) – in use by Day 2.

* CalWARN = California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network
DDW Response

• Began feeding updates to SOC, participating in CalWARN daily phone meetings.
• Day 4: Activated Division Response Center to organize and distribute response effort, relieve Santa Rosa staff.
• Following drought response experience, used “virtual” DRC to allow for division-wide support.
• Day 8: began attending Utilities Meetings at local ICC, to help coordinate repopulation. (Before this, local response was focused primarily on the fire threat.)
• Day 15: Santa Rosa office ready to resume normal operations, DRC deactivated.
Response Tools

- Asked DIT to create new platforms to support response: generic Emergency Response email, SharePoint site, phone hotline.
SharePoint Site
- Cloud-based collaboration

DDW Response

Announcements

+ new announcement or edit this list

Title  Modified

There are no items to show in this view of the “Announcements” list.

Calendar

October 2017

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

8  9  10  11  12  13  14

Documents

New  Upload

Name

DDW_PWS Fire Tracking_2017_Oct
Response Tools

- Documented “live” SOPs using OneNote on shared drive.
Immediate Concerns

- Destruction of water system facilities.
- Access to critical WS infrastructure during evacuations.
- Haz mat removal at WS facilities.
- Compromised water quality – need for public notification as evacuations are lifted.
- “Clearing” water systems through inspection and sampling.
- Staff safety in fire zone.
Pump Station
Redwood Valley
County Water District
Production Building
Paradise Ridge Winery
Long-term Concerns

• Burned watershed – effects on Water Quality:
  • General treatability of water laden with ash or sediment
  • Excessive sludge production
  • Disinfection byproducts due to excessive TOC

• Financial recovery of water systems
  • Adequate records for FEMA claims
  • Need for additional treatment in near-mid term? (E.g., GAC contactors for TOC removal)
  • Availability and timeliness of financial assistance
  • Sustainability – opportunities for consolidation?
Lessons Learned

- Information Technology made a giant difference, allowing live collaboration and workload distribution across many offices.
- Early – and continuous – establishment of SOPs allowed new staff to get quickly up to speed.
- Ensure staff have basic training in ICS, SEMS, FEMA
- Live answer on phone line preferable to recorded message.
- We need improved WS mapping tools that can easily be shared with other responders.
- Many more, once we stop to reflect!
Contact Information

Division of Drinking Water Richmond Office
(510) 620-3474
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Bldg P, Floor 2
Chief, North Coastal Section – Stefan Cajina
Stefan.Cajina@waterboards.ca.gov